

CANDO BRINGS A PARADE OF *artistic* EVENTS TO THE AREA

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It's been said that everybody loves a parade, and if the number of participants are any indication, a lot of people in North Central North Dakota also love the parade of arts activities through Cando every year. Estimates are that 5,000 to 6,000 people a year attend Cando arts events. The number of actors and artists alone this year was at its highest at 768.

"It's a little artistic hub right around here," says Roberta Mundahl, secretary-treasurer of the Cando Arts Council. "We're really busy with our arts council, and it's become important to a lot of people in town." Gospel extravaganzas, children's art camps, professional and local drama performances, dinner theaters and art exhibitions are just a few of the parade of events that march through in the community every year. The Arts Council also sponsors the Prairie Arts Center at the Hawk Museum in rural Wolford, and LaNita Bolton coordinates the quilt and student art shows there every June.

Children's musicals are one of Cando's favorites, with this summer's 23rd season performing *Goldilocks and the Three Pigs*. Assisting Director Larry Damico this year was Summer Arts Safari, a group of college theater students from East Grand Forks. The Arts Council has enjoyed seeing many area children get their start in the arts through activities like this. One of them is Dan Belzer, who now is on the theatre and music faculties of the University of California Los Angeles and Glendale College in California.

"Students and adults are given the chance to develop their creativity and self-confidence each year," says Mundahl. "We believe it benefits them the rest of their lives. Some students go on to perform at Frost Fire Theater in Walhalla and college productions, while others simply develop self-confidence from being on stage."

Belzer returns home many summers to direct the annual adult and teen drama. This year it was *Spoon River Anthology*, which is based on the book of the same name written in the

late 19th century by Edgar Lee Masters. Many people in the cast hadn't been on stage since high school, if ever, and they only had two weeks to rehearse. "But, they did a great job and it was really well received," says Shiela Rabe, president of the arts council. "I originally saw the play in Winnipeg and really liked it. It challenges the audience a bit because it's not your typical Rogers and Hammerstein musical."

Rabe is originally from Canada and moved to Cando six years ago, expecting to find little or no arts activities in the community. She and her husband own the local Cando Bakery, and she was surprised by the activities in town. "It's amazing how many talented people there are here, and I think part of that is because area kids are encouraged to be involved in music and drama at school and in their churches. There are entire families who share a wealth of artistic talent and perform together, with gifted visual artists in the area as well."

Early August brings two separate events -- the children's art camp and the Gospel Extravaganza. The weeklong children's art camp is held at the Audi building, with a total enrollment of 76 students coming from Fargo, Maddock, Rolla, Munich, Bisbee, Egeland, Cando and the state of Ohio. During the week, students experienced abstract painting with strange tools like flyswatters, shoes, sponges, and toy cars, and worked with colorful sculpting clay, bookmaking, printmaking, and drawing with charcoal and chalk pastels. They also made fun junk sculpture from old toys, 'found' objects and wood. "Being at all different age and ability levels, they seem to enjoy the variety of artistic media," says Shelley Lord, director of the Arts Center in Cando.

For the Fifth Annual Gospel Extravaganza, more than 400 people gathered in the city park to hear nine different groups, with performers from Fosston and Lakeville, Minnesota, as well as Bismarck and Cando. It was started by Cathy Anfinson, who works at the local Country Bank and has a wonderful voice herself, according to Rabe. Anfinson started



the singing group "Special Delivery" with a couple other members of the community, and together they have recorded several CDs. She then went to the arts council and asked for help in sponsoring a gospel group event. With the council's support, Anfinson pulled in the performers to make it happen. Receiving little or no pay, the gospel singers come simply for the joy of singing and exposure to the community.

The same day, two other city events are held. One is Arts in the Park, where local artists and crafters set out their wares, and the other is the Cando Chamber of Commerce's Hwy. 281 Classic Cruise parade of old fashioned cars. Rabe says that after the parade, most people drift down through Arts in the Park and further enjoy the gospel singing through the afternoon and evening.

THE AUDI BUILDING

With great acoustics, 310 seats and a lower level art studio, the Audi building is used for some 25 events through the year. Many are ongoing exhibitions, shows or camps that span several days, weeks or even months. It is the center of the "artistic hub" in Cando, and the town's arts council began because of it.

In order to save the city-owned building from demolition, three artists, including Lord, Diane Duty and Ron Mohs, signed a charter in 1983 to start the council and keep the Audi. "Over the years I'd had meetings with the North Dakota Council on the Arts, and I realized that since we were an artistic community we needed to organize an arts council as a base for getting grants and starting programs," says Lord. "With the Arts Council grants, and with matching funds from the city, we were able to see things happen."

Renovation of the upstairs theater began first with refurbishing seats and painting the walls, followed by installing a hardwood floor in the lower level. The lower level is the Art Center and Gallery, which is used for visual art exhibits, art classes, yoga, dance, photography classes and workshops. Current and former Cando residents have provided funds for a new sound system, screen, lighting and curtains. This includes, Lord says, the members of the Arts Center Committee, five women who help put up and take down exhibits. They are Geraldine Holien, JoAnne Curl, Janet Neumann, Katherine Cartwright and Diana Elsperger.

"The lights, sound system and facility make it very conducive to being able

2005 AND 2006 EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS AT THE AUDI

- "The Tool Box Collection" of sculpture by R.J Woodland - October 2-15
- Open Art show for area artists - October 1-2
- Art and yoga classes for students and adults begin in October.
- "North Dakota Student Traveling Art Show," - November 8-19
- "Made in North Dakota," a showing of prints made by the guest printmakers that has been at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo - February
- "Area Student Art Show" - March

UPCOMING EVENTS

- "Special Delivery" Christmas Concert - December 11
- Recital by Anthony Olson, pianist and Eva Peng, soprano soloist - April
- "The Freund Family Singers" - July

For more information, call 701-968-3964,
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to perform," says Babe Belzer, who has directed shows and been involved with the Cando arts for many years. "Through various performances, we have visiting directors, local directors, good crowds and at 8 to 10 dollars per ticket, extremely reasonable prices. I think it's probably one of the lower prices around to see a live show."

The Cando Arts Council has been recognized for its work by receiving the Governor's Award for the Arts in 1995, and the council praises the cooperation of surrounding area newspapers in publicizing its events.

Since 1983, the spirit of volunteerism has continued to be the spark that drives Cando's art activities. "As we all know, in a small town, nothing really gets done unless a lot of people pitch in and work very hard," Lord says.

A number of Cando arts programs are supported by the North Dakota Council on the Arts. For more information about the North Dakota Council on the Arts and its programs that support communities across the state, call 701-328-7590, or visit its website at www.discovernd.com/arts.

